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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 011995

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/AND, INL/RM, INL/LP
WHA PLEASE PASS USOAS
ROME PLEASE PASS US MISSION TO FAO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/29/2015

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [CO](#) [EC](#) [OAS](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL STRATEGY ON AERIAL ERADICATION NEAR
COLOMBIA-ECUADOR BORDER

REF: BOGOTA 11959

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood
Reason: 1.4 (b,d)

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 6.

Summary

2. (C) The Government of Ecuador (GOE) has proposed a UN study on the alleged negative health effects associated with the Government of Colombia's (GOC) aerial spraying of glyphosate near Ecuador's northern border with Colombia. In our view, a UN study is unnecessary and duplicative from a scientific perspective; undermines the ongoing OAS study on the same issue; and further politicizes the matter. Embassy suggests a three-pronged strategy designed to allow Ecuador to continue discussing its concerns within the OAS and to turn off a UN study. End summary.

Ecuador Proposes UN Study

3. (C) The Government of Ecuador (GOE) has proposed a UN study on the alleged negative health effects associated with the Government of Colombia's (GOC) aerial spraying of glyphosate near Ecuador's northern border with Colombia. In order to avoid rolling sensitive Ecuadorian political waters, Colombian FM Barco on December 15 signed in Quito an agreement to temporarily suspend spraying near the Ecuadorian border, beginning in January (she subsequently said that Colombia would spray wherever there was coca). In the same agreement, Barco "took note" of the Ecuadorian request for a UN study of the health and environmental effects of glyphosate and agreed to participate in the formulation of the "terms of reference" for such a study (hoping to sidetrack the study through the terms of reference discussion). UNOCP rep Calvani at Mini-Dublin meeting (reftel) said that there was reluctance in the UN to take up the issue and that the projected cost developed by the Quito UN office was "absurd." He was also unhappy that the original idea would have focused the issue in FAO and WHO, and excluded UNOCP from participating, thereby unbalancing the study toward agriculture and health experts, and away from drug and crime issues.

UN Study Unnecessary

4. (C) In our view, a UN study is unnecessary and duplicative from a scientific perspective for this widely used, 40-year-old herbicide; would call into question the work of the OAS, a regional organization, which issued its own study in March (funded by the U.S., but without U.S. participation); and invite further politicization of a technical issue, which would damage vital U.S. counter-narcotics efforts in Colombia.

Multilateral Strategy

5. (C) Embassy suggests a three-pronged approach to prevent the unnecessary UN study:

(a) through USUN and UNVIE, with assistance as appropriate from US Mission Geneva with the WHO and USFAO with the FAO, encourage Latin American delegations to keep the lead in their own regional organization, the OAS, perhaps working with UNOCP;

(b) through USOAS consult among friendly delegations with an eye to recapturing the debate there, and

(c) work in Bogota and Quito to continue to assuage concerns about glyphosate without denying Ecuador a chance for a debate (in the OAS) or opening the door to yet another technical study of the now four-decade old herbicide.

16. (C) Action requested: Department please advise.

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